

## Illinois report card project

**Meeting:** Advisory Committee Meeting

**Date:** April 8, 2011

**Participants:** Amy Alsop (IFT-AFT), Amy Nowell (CPS ), Ann Courter (UIC), Ben Boer (Advance Illinois ), Dan Brown (ISBE), Dan Harris (Ounce of Prevention), Deb Strauss (PTA), Diane Rauner (Early Learning Council/P-20 Early Learning Rep ), Diane Rutledge (LUDA ), Don White (Troy #30c), Erika Hunt (P-20 University Leader), G.W. Reid (IBHE), Dr. Elaine Johnson (ICCB), Harvey Smith (IIRC), Kathy Ryg (Voices/P-20 Family & Community Outreach ), Katie Cangemi (UWMC), Larry Fillingim (ROE 20), Larry Frank (IEA/NEA), Max McGee (IMSA/P20 Council), Melissa Mitchell (Fed. Of Community Schools ), Michael Jacoby (IASBO ), Michelle Russell (BCG), Sean German (IPA), Shalini Unnikrishnan (BCG), Sharod Gordon (TARGET Area), Steve Pearson (Advance Illinois ), Sue Walter (IFT)

### Summary of discussion:

- Review of objectives of discussion and introduction of all participants
- View on report cards:
  - All aligned that report card is a living document – agreed that some measures will have an "under construction" sign. Important to clarify with this project what the right frequency and process is for revisiting report cards
  - Suggested change accepted to language on "why important" to 'confirms or dispels community viewpoints about school performance'
  - On how used, members suggested to change example for how it enables parents to make informed choices from 'where to live' to 'decide on how to engage to improve children's schools'
- Alignment on pyramid logic. One change suggested:
  - Detail report use to include teachers. Group discussed and agreed that while teachers could use the report card to understand general trends about school performance, it would not be designed to provide classroom level information to modify teaching.
- Project workplan suggested changes:
  - Focus groups should include discussions with legislators
  - Focus groups with educators should try to be done before school start in mid August
  - Focus groups should take advantage of existing town halls and other scheduled focus groups – BCG team to follow up with members (Sharod Gordon and others) to put on calendar any existing discussions
  - Care should be taken to make parent focus groups a representative cross-section, as opposed to simply gathering the opinions of the top 10% most engaged parents
  - As well, care should be taken to ensure that report card metrics align with other state initiatives that are currently in progress
- Discussion and alignment that the example sub-questions for the guiding questions are general and broad – change sub-question on conducive climate from 'offerings of programs' to 'implementation of strategies'.
- Benchmarking and related discussion on metrics:
  - Team agreed that benchmarking is an input into the process – just because a metric is not captured by others is not sufficient reason to exclude it, and vice versa. Furthermore, committee members should feel free to put metrics on team's radar screen
  - Discussion focused primarily on contextual characteristics

- Context characteristics don't have to be causal. However, they should provide information that has implications for the outcomes and progress of school
  - Resources measured as 'per pupil expenditure' has several flaws as a standalone metric. Unclear if parents are interested (need to validate) in this metric, but difficult to provide this information without appropriate context (e.g. is school getting resource support from community that is not being included).
    - Further discussion on school finance metrics revealed that the state's gathering of financial data will need an upgrade in order to be able to "drill down" from the district level to the school level
  - CCSR's research on the "five essentials" could potentially guide the "perceptions/engagement" sub-question
- Agreement that report card overall should not have a letter grade for a school or district evaluating their overall performance. Discussion on comparisons followed and to be discussed further in future meetings
  - General agreement that comparative information can be very valuable to parents
  - Recognition that if comparison is to peers, it can be extremely challenging to define an appropriate peer set
  - Recognition of the potential difficulty of finding appropriate placement (1-pager vs. detailed report) for the comparative information
- On criteria of selecting metrics, no new criteria were added and none were deleted. Following comments were made:
  - Need to recognize that the criteria could be in conflict with each other
  - In easy to understand, should consider not just the metrics but also the calculation approach should be understandable
  - All metrics do not need to be and should not be absolute measures, but show trends, distributions and graphical representations where feasible and helpful
- Awards and recognition related metrics were not included in the summary of metrics in Steering and Advisory Committee past meetings – team to include in consideration set as v0.1 is developed of report card

#### Next steps

- **BCG team to develop a version 0.1 of the report card for the next meeting of the Steering Committee**
- **In addition, BCG team to work in 1-1 or small group discussions with members of the different committees to develop a focus group plan and calendar**